

The Berean Christadelphian

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the exposition and defence of the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints, with the object of helping to make ready a People prepared for the coming of the Lord. Opposed to the unscriptural teachings of the papal and protestant churches of the world.

Edited and Published by:
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“They received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many believed.”—Acts 17: 11.

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CHRIST IS COMING AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

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G. A. Gibson, 294 Glebeholme Blvd., Toronto 6, Ontario, Canada

Vol. 45, No. 1

January, 1957

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EDITORIAL

Moses, the Man of God

As we enter a new calendar year, and begin to read our Bibles again, we are soon introduced to the work of Moses. We do not read of him in the early part of the year and then part company with him for the remainder of the year, because there is not a month passes without coming in contact with him and his work in some manner. The reason Moses stands out above all other men—except the one he prefigured—is due to the part he performed in the greatest era of divine operation the world has seen.

There are many reasons why we should consider Moses, but four in particular. First, we reflect upon him because of his great part in the Exodus of Israel from Egypt and, second, because of his work in the presentation and administration of the divine law that bears his name. Our third reason is because he wrote of Jesus, and the fourth is due to the high place he occupied in the estimation of Jesus.

Moses was the youngest of the three children of Amram and Jochebed, and was born about 1570 B.C. His brother's name was Aaron, and his sister—Miriam; both of whom figured prominently in his work. His birth took place at the time the king of Egypt had determined to destroy every newly born male child among the Israelites. The visible hand of God appears in the manner in which Moses was saved by Pharaoh's daughter, who gave him his name, and reared him as an adopted son. Stephen, in his memorable defence, said of him that—

"Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds"—Acts 7:22.

At what period in his life Moses became aware of his nationality we are not told, but Paul informs us that—

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach for Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt"—Heb. 11:24-26.

Moses renounced the refinement and luxury of the court of Pharaoh, and fled to the land of Midian where he lived for 40 years in the obscurity, the roughness, and the poverty of the wilderness. At the end of that time, as he kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, in the vicinity of Mount Horeb, the angel of the Lord appeared to him at the burning bush. Moses was informed that God was aware of the affliction of His people, and that it was His purpose to deliver them, saying—

"Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt"—Ex. 3:10.

The meekness and humility of Moses is well exhibited in what followed, as shown in chapters 3 and 4. The interviews with his brethren, and his appearances before the king of Egypt are graphically described in the book of Exodus, as are also the wonderful miracles that God performed by the hand of Moses as His mediator. There, too, is exhibited his untiring patience, and his unwavering faith in God, and what He had promised.

Never more alluring prospects opened up before any man than those which the world held out to him. The throne of mighty Egypt was within his reach. All that wealth could procure, or pleasure bestow, or the greatest earthly power command, was easily at his call. But the glory of these things paled in his view before the more excellent character of those invisible honors which God had set before him. It was his supreme faith in these things that animated him amidst all the conflicts attendant on the Exodus, and all the difficulties that confronted him during the 40 years wandering in the wilderness.

The third 40 years of his life was entirely devoted to the interests and welfare of others. He had no thought whatever of his own advantage, and labored night and day in order to secure the emancipation of his people. No greater, or more lasting, epitaph was ever written than that which states—

"There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face"—Deut. 34:10.

Upon his return to Egypt, Moses began at once to carry out the terms of his commission. But his primary efforts only increased the burdens of the people, and Moses was almost in despair. Then began the series of plagues that culminated in the slaying of the firstborn of the Egyptians. The people of Israel were not affected by this because they had carried out the instructions of Moses relating to the Passover. By the sprinkling of the blood of the Passover lambs on the doorposts, their families were protected from the power of the destroying angel. Paul, commenting on this, said—

"Through faith Moses kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest He that destroyed the firstborn should touch them"—Heb. 11:28.

Following this display of divine power, Moses led the people forth from Egypt until they came to the shore of the Red Sea. Beginning at this point, and continuing throughout the subsequent 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, until they reached the border of the land of promise, Moses was subject to the murmuring and rebellious conduct of the people. Even though he was tried almost to the breaking point, the only blot upon his beautiful character was the lack of patience or self-control at the water of Meribah.

Jesus said on one occasion, "Moses wrote of me." No other man has ever received such distinguished and divine honor as God gave to him when He said (Deut. 18:18)—

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, **like unto thee**, and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

On the day in which the lame man was healed at the gate of the temple, Peter quoted this verse to prove that Jesus was the one to whom this prophecy referred; and Stephen also, when making his defence before the council, used the same verse to prove that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

Much could be said of the honor showered upon Moses at mount Sinai, for there he received the laws which constituted Israel a nation, and the divine system of religion embodying the fundamental principles which were to regulate the lives of the people of Israel.

As an historian, an orator, a leader, a statesman, and as a man in many ways, Moses stands above all except the one he typified. If he had not been a God-appointed prophet, he could never have left such a monumental record. The high and lofty estimation in which Jesus held Moses is seen by the many times he referred to him, and the manner in which he used him in support of his own teaching. Among the many references, we read "For Moses said," "What did Moses command you?" and "Did not Moses give you the Law?" But one of the most impressive statements Jesus made was his concluding words of the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus—

"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead"—Luke 16:31.

To Moses we owe that immeasurably important portion of the Scripture of Truth from which we learn of the creation, the entrance of sin and death, the flood, the call of Abraham and the promises made to him which constitute the basis of the Gospel, the work of Joseph, the Passover, the giving of the Law, the Tabernacle and its furniture. But in addition to these glorious things, we owe much to Moses for a foremost example of a godly life generated by humility, prayerful ness, faithfulness and obedience.

—Editor.

HOW TO STAY AWAKE WHILE THE WORLD SLEEPS

The way practically to obey the exhortation of Paul, "not to sleep as do others is to **take those means that will keep us awake**. The man who neglects the daily reading of the Scripture is not taking those means. He is deceiving himself. He thinks he can keep awake by a mere effort of the will. He thinks as he knows the Truth it is unnecessary for him to trouble himself with the reading of the Word.

He forgets first, that no man can ever know the Truth thoroughly by a mere study of first principles at the beginning, in consequence of the diffuse and diversified form in which it has been divinely communicated, and in consequence of the natural antagonism between human thoughts and divine thoughts.

And secondly, he forgets that even if we could know the Truth thoroughly at the start, the mind quickly loses the knowledge it has acquired, so far as its POWER is concerned, especially because it is the knowledge . . . God which the mind is so prone to throw off rather than to retain.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

This is the declaration of Jesus, and all men will find it true at last on one side or other. "Bread alone," will only give us the natural energy of mind and body which, after a while will pass away never to return.

The Word which God has spoken, incorporated now into the mental man by daily reading and meditation, will even now, while it sanctifies us to God, impart a healthful nobility and joy, and in the end ensure a participation in that length of days, for ever and ever, which the Father gave to Jesus in answer to his prayer (Ps. 21:4).

—**Bro. Roberts.**

The First Day of the Week

"Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread"—Acts 20:7

BY BROTHER JOHN THOMAS

On the first day of the creation-week God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. So on the first day of the week "THE TRUE LIGHT" came forth from the darkness of the tomb "like dew from the womb of the morning."

It is a day to be much remembered of his people, because it assures them of their justification "in him," of their own resurrection to life, and of the certainty of his "judging the world in righteousness as Jehovah's king, when they shall also reign with him as kings and priests to God (Rom. 4:25; 8:11; I Cor. 15:14, 20; Acts 17:31; Rev. 5:9-10).

This day is also notable on account of the special interviews which occurred between Jesus and his disciples after his resurrection (John 20:19, 26). He ascended to heaven on this day, even the forty-third from his crucifixion. And seven days after, that is the fiftieth, being "the day of Pentecost," the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles, and the Gospel of the Kingdom preached for the first time *in his Name*.

Power being in the hands of their enemies, the Christians of the Hebrew nation still continued to observe the seventh day according to the custom. Hence we find the apostles frequenting the synagogues on the sabbath days and reasoning with the people out of the Scriptures.

To have done otherwise would have been to create an unnecessary prejudice, and to let slip one of the best opportunities of introducing the Gospel to the attention of the Jewish public. They did not forsake the synagogues until they were expelled. While they frequented *these*, however, on the *seventh* day, they assembled themselves together with the disciples whose assemblies constituted the churches of the saints and of God. They ordained elders over these societies, and taught them to—

“Observe all things whatsoever Jesus had commanded them” (Matt. 28:20).

In his letter to the Hebrew Christians, Paul exhorts them to—

". . . not forsake the assembling of yourselves together" (10:25).

Such an exhortation as this implies a *stated time* and place of assembly. On what day, then, did the churches of the saints meet to exhort one another so as to provoke to love and good works? Certainly not on the *seventh* day, for then the apostles were in the synagogues. What day then more appropriate than the first of the week?

Now it cannot be affirmed that the saints were commanded to meet on this day, because there is no testimony to that effect in the New Testament. But it is beyond dispute that they *did* assemble themselves together on the first day of the week, and the most reasonable inference is that they did so *in obedience to the instruction of the apostles*, from whose teaching they derived all their faith and practice which constituted them the disciples of Christ.

To keep the first day of the week to the Lord is possible only to the saints. There is no law (except the emperor Constantine's) that commands *sinners* to keep *holy* the first, or eight, day, or "Sunday," as the Gentiles term it. For a sinner to keep this day unto the Lord he must become one of the Lord's people. He must believe the Gospel of the Kingdom and Name of Christ, and become obedient to it, before any religious service he can offer will be accepted.

He must come under law to Christ by *putting on Christ*. Having become a Christian, if he would keep the day to the Lord, he must assemble with a congregation of New Testament saints and assist in edifying and provoking them to love and good works, in showing forth the death of Jesus, in giving thanks to the Father, in celebrating the resurrection of Christ, and in praising and blessing God.

Under the Gospel, or "Law of Liberty," he is subject to no "yoke of bondage" concerning a sabbath day. It is his *delight*, when an opportunity presents, to celebrate in this way the day of the resurrection. He requires no penal statutes to compel him to a formal and disagreeable self-denial or "duty"; for it is his meat and drink to do the will of his Father Who is in heaven.

The Law of Moses was delivered to the *Israelites* and not to the Gentiles, who were therefore "without the Law"—

"What things soever the Law saith, it saith to them who are under the Law" (Rom. 3:19).

Consequently the nations were not amenable to it; and though they obtained not the blessings of Mt. Gerizim (unless they became faithful Jews by adoption), neither were they obnoxious to the curses of Mount Ebal (Deut. 27:9-26). The faithless Jews and Gentiles are equally aliens to the precepts of Christ and his apostles. What these prescribe is enjoined upon the disciples of Jesus. *They only are "under law to Christ."*

"What have I (says Paul) to do to judge them that are without? God judgeth them"
(I Cor. 5:12-13).

He has caused the Gospel of the Kingdom to be preached to sinners "for the obedience of faith." When they are judged, it will be for "not obeying the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:7-10), and not because they do not "go to church," or do not keep a sabbath instituted by a semi-pagan emperor.

The sabbath God requires sinful men to observe is to CEASE FROM THE WORKS OF THE FLESH as completely as He rested from the work of creation on the seventh day, that they may enter into the millennial rest that remaineth for the people of God (Heb. 4:9-11).

Men frequently err in their speculations from inattention to the marked distinction which subsists in the Scriptures between those classes of mankind termed "saints" and "sinners." They confound what is said to, or concerning, the one, with what is said in relation to the other. Relatively to the institutions of God they are as near or afar off as are "citizens" and "foreigners" to the laws and constitution of the United States.

"What the Law saith, it saith to them who are under the Law."

This is a principle laid down by Paul concerning the Law of Moses which is equally true of the codes of all nations. "Citizens" are the saints, or "separated ones," of the particular code by which they are insulated from all other people; while "foreigners" or "aliens" from their commonwealth are sinners in relation to it; for they live in other countries in total disregard of its institutions, and doing contrary to its laws, and yet are blameless; so that if they were to visit the country of that commonwealth, *they would not be punished for their former course*, because they were not under law to it. Let them, however, while sojourning there, continue in their native customs, and they would become guilty and worthy of the punishment made and provided for such offenders.

As I have shown, the observance of the seventh day was obligatory only upon the Israelites so long as the Mosaic code was in force, being "a sign" between God and them. The sabbaths belong to the land and people of Israel, and can be only kept according to the Law while they reside in the country. This will appear from the fact that the Law requires that "two lambs of the first year without spot" should be offered with other things "as the burnt-offering of every sabbath;" an offering which,

like all the offerings, must be offered *in a Temple in Jerusalem* where the Lord has placed His Name, and "not in the dwelling-places of Jacob." Israel must therefore be restored to their own country before even *they* can keep the sabbath. Then, when "the throne is established in mercy, and he (the Lord Jesus) shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hastening righteousness" (Isa. 16:5)—then, I say—

"They shall hallow My sabbath" (Eze. 44:24).

But these sabbaths will no longer be celebrated on the seventh day. They will be changed from the seventh to the *eighth*, or *first* day of the week (which are the same).

The "dispensation of the fulness of times," popularly styled the "Millennium," will be the antitype, or *substance*, of the Mosaic Feast of Tabernacles which was a "*shadow* of things to come." In this type, or pattern, Israel were to rejoice before the Lord for seven days, beginning on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when they had gathered the fruit of the land. In relation to the *first* day of the seven, the law says (Lev. 23:35)—

"It shall be a holy convocation: **ye shall do not servile work therein.**"

This was what we call Sunday. The statute then continues—

"On the **eighth** day (also Sunday) shall be an holy convocation unto you, and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord: it is a solemn assembly, and **ye shall do no servile work therein.**"

Again (verse 39)—

"On the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the 8th day shall be a sabbath.

Thus, in this "pattern of things in the heavens," the first and eighth days are constituted holy days in which no work was to be done. It also represents the palm-bearing or victorious ingathering of the 12 tribes of Israel from their present dispersion to the land of their fathers, when—

"The Lord shall set His hand again **the second time** to recover the remnant of His people"
(Isa. 11:11).

Three times in 4 verses does Zechariah style the yearly going up of the Gentiles to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts there, the *keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles*—an event which is consequent upon the destruction of Nebuchadnezzar's image and the re-establishment of the kingdom and throne of David (see Zech. 14).

This national confluence of the Gentiles to Jerusalem is characteristic of Messiah's times, and of the true or real festival of Tabernacles, when he will "confess to God among the Gentiles" and sing unto His Name, and "they shall rejoice with His people (Israel)"—Rom. 15:9-10. Referring to this time the Lord says (Eze. 43:7-9)—

"The place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I WILL DWELL in the midst of the children of Israel FOR EVER.

"And My holy Name shall the children of Israel NO MORE defile, neither they, nor their kings.

"They have even defiled My holy Name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed in Mine anger.

"Now let them put away their whoredom and the carcasses of their kings far from Me, and **I will dwell in the midst of them for ever.**"

This is clearly a prophecy of what shall be hereafter, because the house of Israel still continues to defile God's holy Name by their abominations; but when this comes to pass they shall defile it "*no more.*"

After the declaration of these things, Ezekiel is commanded to show them the construction of the Temple which is destined to be the "*House of Prayer for all nations,*" with the ordinances, forms and laws thereof. The Lord God then declares (v. 18)—

"The ordinances of the altar **in the day when they shall make it.**"
—and when the Levites of the seed of Zadok shall approach unto Him. The "cleansing of the altar" and the consecration of the priests is then effected by the offerings of *seven days*—

"And when these days are expired, it shall be that **upon the eighth day AND SO FORWARD,** the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings, and I will accept you (O Israel), saith the Lord" (v. 27).

Thus, the day of the Lord's resurrection from his seventh-day incarceration in the tomb becomes the sabbath of the future age which shall be hallowed by the priests of Israel, and be observed by all nations as a day of holy convocation in which they shall rejoice, and do no manner of servile work at all.

Constantine, though not a Christian himself, paid homage to the truth so far as to compel the world to respect the day on which Christ Jesus arose from the dead. Hence, in 328, he ordained that the day should be kept religiously, which a judaizing clergy construed into a sabbatical observance according to the Mosaic law concerning the seventh day.

Christ and his apostles did not promulgate a civil and ecclesiastical code for the nations, when they preached the Gospel of the Kingdom. Their object was not to give the nations laws and constitutions, but to separate a peculiar people *from the nations* who should afterwards rule them justly and in fear of the Lord, when the dispensation of the fulness of times should be introduced (Acts 15:14; 1 Cor. 6:2; 2 Sam. 23:3-4; Tit. 2:11).

To be able to do this, these "peculiar" were required to be "*holy, unblamable and unreprouvable before God*" (Col. 1:22-23; 1 Thess. 2:19, 3:13). To this end instructions were delivered to them, that under the divine tuition they might be—

". . . renewed in the spirit of their minds; and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:23-24).

"THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE PERFECT, AND THOROUGHLY FURNISHED UNTO ALL GOOD WORKS"

Not partially, but THOROUGHLY furnished, wealthily furnished, heartily furnished, efficiently furnished, zealously furnished—even to the point of having the word of Christ dwelling in us RICHLY, with that intensity of appreciation expressed in the words,

"My soul breaketh for the longing it hath at all times unto thy testimonies."

And furnished unto ALL good works—not one or two; not like those who perform one set of duties and neglect others:

Who attend lectures, but absent themselves from the breaking of bread;
Who like to argue about first principles, but disrelish exhortation to holiness and prayer:
Who get up public meetings, but forget the ministration of the saints;
Who like discussion, but have not taste for worship:

Who are interested in the signs of the times, but dull on the law of Christ:
Who take an interest in the stranger, but forget love to the brethren:
Who zealously invoke Scriptures; the law and the testimony, but neglect the daily readings of the Scriptures:
Who teach doctrine, but pass over mercy and the love of God:
Who are diligent in business, but do not serve the Lord:
Who cherish theory, but fail in practice:
Who are alive to correctness of belief, but dead to holiness of life:
Who contend for the faith, but neglect the works without which faith is dead:
Who promise liberty to others, while they themselves are servants of corruption. —**Bro. Roberts.**

Bible Questions Answered

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

“God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting life”—John 3: 16.

There is no doubt as to this meaning a "simple belief on Christ," as the appointed condition of salvation, but then it does not tell us all. It does not inform us *what it is that we are "simply" to believe*. We should not know from the mere terms of the verse that it meant anything more than believing in Christ's appearance in the world 1850 years ago. We should not know that it embraced his death, his resurrection, his coming again, and his kingdom, as we learn it does from many other testimonies (1 Cor. 15:1-3; Rom. 10:9; Heb. 9:28; Acts 8:12). Neither should we know that baptism and obedience of other commandments were necessary in addition to "simple belief."

We must not found our faith on any brief statement of the matter, but must open our minds to the discernment and reception of all that is testified about it.

* * *

The Person of Christ and the Mission of Christ

These cannot be disjoined. Yet the popular practice which you think we should copy uses the one to destroy the other, without intending it. The *personality* of Christ cannot be too vividly realized or too strongly cherished, but our love of Christ as a person must always be based on a *knowledge of him as the manifestation of the divine purpose*.

He comes before men styling himself THE TRUTH, and the man who does not comprehend the Truth is not prepared to offer acceptable love. Christ will not accept love except on the basis of knowledge as to who he is, what he has come into the world for, and what his will is. This in summary is the Truth.

Men must believe the Gospel before they can be saved, and the Gospel is made up of the *facts about himself*, in his first and second appearances, or—

"The things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ"—(Acts 8:12).

A faith that lays hold of him, but ignores the Truth, is not a faith that will be of any avail. The "him" used in the epistles, must always be read as expressive of *the Truth of which he is the embodiment*. To read it in the personal sense as distinct from the doctrinal, is to fall into the mistake of the young man who came to Christ with personal admiration, but doctrinal ignorance, styling him "Good Master," which Christ refused to receive on the basis on which it was tendered:

"Why callest thou **me** good? There is none good but One, that is, God"—(Luke 18:19).

* * *

The Crucifixion in Paul's Epistles

To preach "Christ crucified" is to proclaim two things. It is to proclaim that Jesus of Nazareth is the "Christ the king of Israel," and, therefore, to proclaim "the things concerning the Kingdom of God:" *and* that this appointed king of Israel was crucified on account of the death reigning through Adam.

Popular theology only preaches the crucifixion; it says nothing about the *Christship* of the man crucified. And even the crucifixion it misunderstands and misrepresents. It gives it a pagan dress. It says it was the *endurance of torment* by the eternal God at the hands of the eternal God, that immortal souls might escape decreed eternal torment. It would not express the doctrine, perhaps, precisely in those terms, but that is what it amounts to. It is a perversion and mystification of the whole matter.

The death of Christ was the *sustaining of the consequence of sin* by a man who, though hereditarily partaking of it, being sinless, could survive the vindication of the law in a resurrection which would have been impossible with a sinner; and it was the provision, thus, of a NAME by the assumption of which (through faith and obedience) we (condemned, perishing children of Adam) acquire a title to life, otherwise beyond our reach.

But all this does not exclude, but rather renders inevitable, "the glory that shall be revealed." And as this glory to be revealed is the glory of the Kingdom of God, the cross *necessitates* the Kingdom instead of *supplanting* it.

* * *

The Gospel in altered circumstances

Paul's language, though regulated by inspiration, was affected by the circumstances of his own time, and, therefore, to some extent, an alteration of these circumstances imposes an altered *phraseology* upon us, if we would succeed in making Paul's *ideas* understood.

The moderns deny the Kingdom that Paul preached, and therefore, in modern teaching of the Truth, there must, of necessity, be given great prominence to the doctrine of the Kingdom. They do not deny the cross in the historical sense; they *misunderstand* it, so that the doctrine of the cross naturally becomes more a matter of *explanation* than *proclamation*.

The Kingdom is entirely unknown. The dead weight of modern opposition falls upon this branch of the Truth; and therefore through the sheer force of necessity, this takes the front in the battle. But do not suppose because Christadelphians speak much about the Kingdom; they think little of the cross *scripturally understood*. You will find that *both* occupy, in the system of truth to which they are related, that position of supreme importance which they possess in fact—the one as much as the other; but in the public presentation of the Truth, the form or manner of it is determined by the public necessity which, as already said, calls for a prominence of *ideas* over *phrases* misunderstood, and a prominence of the kingdom (apparently) over the cross.

* * *

"No man hath ascended into heaven"—John 3:13

When Jesus said this, he did not mean to deny that Elijah was removed from the earth by a whirlwind, as recorded in 2 Kings 2:11, but merely that any man had ascended to the Father's presence, as he, Jesus, would do and has since done, in accordance with the word of Jeremiah (30:21)—

"I will cause him to draw near and he shall approach unto Me."

"Heaven" is not definite enough to found an objection on. There is a heaven local to the earth—the firmament (Gen. 1:8), and a *heaven of heavens* (Deut. 10:14) where the Father dwells.

* * *

"The devils also believe, and tremble"—James 2:19

Men possessed of unclean spirits were themselves spoken of as unclean spirits (or demons)—Mark 3:11. These lunatics were believers in God and in Christ, as is proved by their ejaculations on meeting Christ; but their faith was not a saving faith, because it did not work rational results in their lives. James, in the words you enquire about, points to this as a proof that "Faith without works is dead."

Out of Egypt Have I Called My Son

PART SEVEN

"As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses."

Moses and Aaron having been made acquainted with the terrible straits into which the children of Israel had fallen as the result of the first interview with Pharaoh,

"Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that Thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all" (Ex. 5:22-23).

In answer to these expostulations,

"The Lord said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land."

Moses was then directed to see the children of Israel again, and assure them that the Lord would bring them out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and redeem them with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments, whereby they should know that He is the Lord. Moses having delivered this message to Israel, they refused to hearken to him—

". . . for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage."

Moses was then instructed to—

"Go in, speak unto Pharaoh . . . that he let the children of Israel go out of his land."

But Moses said—

"Behold, the **children of Israel** have not hearkened unto me; how then shall **Pharaoh** hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips? And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt" (6:9-13).

This was a very trying time, not only for the children of Israel, but for Moses also, whom, it appears from his answers to the Lord, felt his utter incompetency to execute the task before him, and would fain be excused from further interference.

Ah! poor Moses! *Of thyself*, truly, thou couldst not effect the release of the mighty people of Israel from their cruel bondage—*impossible!* Think not of thy failure to accomplish this promised

deliverance forty years previously; trust not in thine own strength, but remember Who it is that has bid thee do it, and the power of *His* arm. Thou knowest not as yet the way that God has chosen to bring this to pass. His ways are not thy ways, neither are His thoughts thine. Thou wast looking for immediate deliverance, not fully realizing the object in view.

Dost thou not know that the earth is fast sinking into idolatry, and degenerating into a condition such as obtained in the days of Noah? Seest thou not that the call of Abraham, and the promise to make of him a great nation, and the fulfilment of that promise, in a preliminary sense, in the multiplication of Israel in Egypt, has been done with a view to *counteract the growing apostasy of the world from God*, and to provide a basis for divine operations in the midst of the earth, to the end that the redemption of the world, purposed from the beginning, may be effectually worked out?

Dost thou not perceive, in order to make an effective beginning in this direction, that it is necessary to *pour out divine judgments* upon the nation holding the children of Israel in bondage, which shall not only have a salutary and lasting effect upon Egypt, but upon all nations which shall hear of those judgments, that the Name of the Lord may be declared throughout all the earth?

These thoughts, if borne in mind, will help us in the understanding of the ways of God as exhibited in this most instructive narrative of Israel's deliverance from Egypt by Moses. We shall learn somewhat how great God is, and the greatness of His ways.

It is for lack of this knowledge that the fear of God occupies so small a place in the hearts even of those who profess to know Him. The transaction of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, and the signs and wonders wrought on that occasion, have been almost lost sight of, even by the world of nominal Christians and it has become a very common thing for professed believers in Christ to look upon this vital element of the Word of God as of mythical origin.

Nothing short of a repetition of the judgments which overtook Egypt upon the occasion we are considering, extending to the utmost limits of the earth (as compared with which the past judgments of God will sink into insignificance), will suffice to bring the world into that wholesome fear of God which shall result in universal righteousness, joy, and peace.

And this, God has said that He *will do* in connection with the second and final deliverance of the same nation which is now scattered over the whole earth as a punishment for its iniquities. But of this, more anon.

It may also be remarked, however, that the knowledge of the magnitude of the universe which the scientist has collected (though he himself be an unbeliever), is very helpful to the true believer in the God of the Bible, Whose *goodness* and *mercy* are on a par with the *greatness*, and the infinitude of the *wisdom* and *power* displayed in the heavens which declare His glory, and as He Himself saith—

"For as the heaven is high above the earth, **so great** is His mercy toward them that fear Him
(Ps. 53:11).

The revelation of His glorious purpose with Israel, through whom He will ultimately bless all families of the earth, enables us to understand how it is that a Being so immeasurably great should look with such favor upon the children of men, whom He has condescended even to invite to become His sons and daughters upon the conditions which He has pleased to make known in the gospel of Christ.

Well may we understand that, with God, "all things are possible," and learn to confide in the exceeding great and precious promises which He has made, and ratified in the death and resurrection of His glorious Son.

Before proceeding to furnish the detailed account of God's judgments upon Egypt, whereby the deliverance of His people Israel was effected, the Exodus narrative gives the connection of the family of Aaron with Abraham, "the holder of the promises." In this genealogy Moses joins the tribe of Reuben and Simeon with that of Levi. And, by means of the connection thus established, we are enabled to calculate correctly the period that had elapsed from the typical confirmation of the covenant with Abraham to the fulfilment of the promised deliverance from Egypt, namely, 430 years.

We also learn that Levi lived longer than any of his brethren. The age of none of the rest is recorded, except that of Joseph, whom Levi survived about twenty-seven years. In Exodus 6:20 we have the birth of Aaron and Moses recorded in connection with the verification of the promise of God to Abraham (Gen. 15:16), to which we have referred, in the fourth generation; for Moses was the son of Amram, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Jacob.

How perfect is the line of descent from the days of Adam in paradise to Moses and Aaron, the former being at the time of the proposed deliverance eighty years, and the latter eighty-three years old! *Christ* is the only explanation of this genealogy so scrupulously preserved and maintained until his birth, *from which time all genealogical descent is discontinued.*

God having constituted Moses a god (*elohim*—mighty one) to Pharaoh, and Aaron his prophet, Moses was again directed as to the course he was to pursue, and made fully to understand that the signs and wonders were to be so multiplied, and of such a character, that *both Israel and the Egyptians should be brought to the knowledge of God.* This is God's own explanation; and Moses appears now to have apprehended this.

From the frequency of the interviews between Moses and the divine representative we may gather that the angel of God was at all times very near to Moses, and knew all that was going on; and that he permitted himself to be seen by him only on the fitting occasions of these interviews. And we can readily conceive that much patience had to be exercised by him in bringing Moses and Aaron into that full assurance of faith and understanding they now appear to have attained. This accomplished:

"The Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Show a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.

"And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord commanded: And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

"Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

"And He hardened Pharaoh's heart that he hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had said" (Exo. 7:8-13).

There is no necessity to enter into any laborious argument to show that the magicians of Egypt did not really do what Moses and Aaron did, but only *appeared* to do the real; for such a view would be at complete variance with the divine narrative, which is careful to tell us that "the magicians of Egypt did so *with their enchantments.*" Now we need not to be told that anything said to be done by enchantment was not real, for, as every one will know, this word has reference to the mode of incantation by lustral fires, or fumigations, or to the arts of dazzling the eyes of spectators, by which they were deluded.

In the Law given by God to Israel they were forbidden recourse to enchantments (Lev. 19:26). Nevertheless, in later times they resorted to them, as it is written,

"And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke Him to anger" (2 Kgs. 17:17).

The magicians who figured so conspicuously before Pharaoh are referred to by the apostle Paul, who mentions the names of two of the principal performers of magic on this occasion—

"Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith" (2 Tim. 3:8).

The very connection in which he uses the names of these two famous magicians excludes the possibility of the reality of their performances. The difference between the reality and the delusive is strikingly manifest in the case of Simon Magus, who used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one; and who, beholding the miracles and signs which were done by Philip, believed the truth preached by the evangelist and was baptized. And when the apostles came to Samaria, and imparted to the believers, the gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands, Simon, seeing this operation and its effects, offered the apostles money to confer upon him the same power which they possessed, a proposal which speedily brought upon him the most severe reproof and reprobation of the apostles.

There are many other instances of the divine reprobation of enchantments in the Scriptures. It may readily be inferred that God chose the kind of evidence of His power which would be most likely to provoke some attempt on the part of the wise men of Egypt to invalidate His miracles; and at the same time have the desired effect upon Pharaoh, namely, to harden his heart, which was supplemented by angelic volition in the same direction—the real object being to *prolong the display of divine power in the presence of the Egyptians and Israel* in order that the name of God might be written in the earth so firmly that the remembrance of it would not easily be forgotten—especially by His own people, to whom He would, thenceforward, be in a position to make the most constant and powerful appeals, not only verbally, but by the adoption of *ordinances among them which would continually bring the fact of their deliverance from Egypt amid signs and wonders wrought in their behalf before their minds*; and so by this means lead them to the renunciation of the wretched practice of magic, and all lying wonders, these having been made bare and exposed by the sterling miraculous realities which their own eyes had witnessed.

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL)

It is expressly testified of him that "having suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

We may therefore take comfort. Our comfort is in God. We do not rely for comfort upon the state of our feelings. These may be depressed enough from physical causes. God is not displeased at our weakness; He is displeased at a lacking faith and a faltering obedience.—**Bro. Roberts.**

"I Will Be Sanctified"

*"Every transgression received a just recompense of reward . . .
how shall we escape if we neglect . . .?"—Heb. 2:2*

Our Bible readings for the past 10 days (July 21-30) have taken us through a momentous period in the world's history. But it is not merely history—it is much more than that, for it is part of the things Paul says "were written *for our instruction.*"

It is our duty, therefore, not only to read what is written, but to *give attention* to what we read, so that we will be properly instructed in the way of salvation. As Paul said to Timothy—

"Till I come, give attendance to reading, exhortation, doctrine."

It was not ordinary reading, for Paul said again—

"**Study** to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing (or handling) the Word of Truth"—2 Tim. 2:15.

Paul was not thinking of ordinary reading, where one reads something without assimilating the ideas presented by the written word. *Study* is the word he used. That is *apply your mind* to what you read so that you will acquire knowledge, and then *reflect upon it*. Let us, then, consider some of the things we have been reading.

On July 21st, we found ourselves in the company of David, the son of Jesse, who had been established as king. One of his first acts was to gather a great company of the chosen men of Israel, and go to Kirjath-jearim to get the ark of God, where it had been for many years in the home of Abinadab.

It was taken out of the house and placed upon a new cart which was drawn by oxen, under the care of Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab. When they reached Nachon's threshingfloor, the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah, anxious about the ark, placed his hands upon it to steady it and keep it from falling—

"And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his rashness; and there he died by the ark of God"—2 Sam. 6:7.

This judgment was so severe that David became afraid, and stopped the proceedings at once, and took the ark into the home of Obed-edom, where it remained 3 months. At first sight, this seems harsh treatment for one whose intentions were for good; but God does not cater to our "good intentions" unless they are based on *divine principles*. We must remember that the whole course of action was out of order. The charge given to the sons of Kohath regarding transporting the ark, was (Num. 4:5-6)—

"Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of testimony with it: and shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and put in the staves."

Whether any of these instructions were carried out, we do not know; but we do know that it should not have been placed upon a cart, for the staves were provided to carry the ark upon the shoulders of the Levites, and when doing this (Num. 4:15)—

"They shall not touch any holy thing, **lest they die.**"

The command was clear and unmistakable. Therefore, it was the duty of Uzzah to see that the provisions of the Law were observed. Because he failed to do this, he suffered the *forewarned penalty* of the Law. This occasion would be included in Paul's remark in Heb. 2:2 that—

"Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward."
Therefore, said Paul (Heb. 2:3)—

"How shall we escape, if we **neglect** so great salvation."

Neglect—not deliberate wrongdoing, but just *neglect*. The death of Uzzah teaches us a grave and sober lesson regarding the growing tendency of many brethren and sisters treating divine things with undue familiarity. You will recall that when Nadab and Abihu were struck down for "offering strange fire,"

"This is it that the Lord spake, saying, **I will be sanctified** in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people **I will be glorified**"—Lev. 10:3.

This incident occurred in the early stages of the establishment of that great divine system known as the Law of Moses, which Paul said was a schoolmaster that led them unto Christ. It was necessary, therefore, that God should enforce the discipline of the Law, especially that which related to the duties of the priests.

When God sets before man the principle upon which He may be approached, *there can be no deviation from it*. The principle ordained through the medium of Moses was clear. The high priest must approach Him with implicit reverence, and profound respect, mingled with devotion. Therefore, said Yahweh,

"I WILL be sanctified in them that come nigh Me."

"*I will be sanctified.*" That is, He must be hallowed or revered by those who approach Him. Like Abraham, we should always recognize our place, and realize that we are but creatures of dust and ashes. When we perform any service in the Truth, it must be done with profound respect, mingled with love and awe, or reverential fear. This is one of the stern lessons of the Law.

On July 22, we were again in the company of David as Nathan the prophet came to him with the words of the covenant recorded in 2 Sam. 7. It is well that we refresh our minds on certain phases of this covenant.

If there were any doubt about the identity of the son mentioned, it is placed beyond all uncertainty by Peter when he was speaking on the day of Pentecost—

"Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne"
—Acts 2:30.

At the same time, it is well for us to know that David *did* understand, as Peter says—

"I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations"—Ps. 89:3-4.

Even at the time the covenant was made, David said—

"And this was yet a small thing in Thy sight, my Lord Yahweh; but Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant's house for a **great while to come**"—2 Sam 7:19.

One of the outstanding features in the life of David, was his *recognition of the Majesty of the heavens*. In 2 Sam. 7 he addresses the Father as "Yahweh Elohim." From this we learn, that when we approach the Father in prayer, we must do it with reverence, admiration and profound respect. Observe Daniel, a man greatly beloved, as he prayed—

"O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments"—Dan. 9:3.

And here is another example from David—

"Blessed be Thou, O Yahweh, the God of Israel our Father, from age even unto age.

"Thine, O Yahweh, are Greatness and Might and Beauty and Victory and Majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; Thine is the kingdom, O Yahweh, and Thou are exalted as head above all"—1 Chron. 29:10-11.

And finally, Elijah's prayer in the presence of Ahab—

"O Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel . . . Hear me, O Yahweh, hear me, that this people may know that Thou, Yahweh, art God"—1 Kings 18:36-37.

These examples are sufficient to impress upon our minds our relation to God, the Creator and Sustainer of the great and boundless universe. If our prayers are to be acceptable, the first requisite is for us to recognize that we are but creatures of the dust, while God is the possessor of heaven and earth.

The next step is faith—not a doubtful faith, but a *positive faith*—one that works by love. Such a faith is described by Paul as "A confident anticipation of things hoped for, a full persuasion of things not seen." Without this type of faith, Paul further says, "It is impossible to please God." As an illustration, he cites the case of Abraham, saying—

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform"—Rom. 4:20-21.

The most powerful moral characteristic a brother or sister can exhibit in his, or her, life is an absolute, grateful and childlike belief in the Word of God.

On the other hand, one of the greatest insults we can offer to God is to come to the conclusion that He does not mean exactly what He says. Therefore, one of the foremost principles of divine truth that could be stamped upon our minds is that—

"God will be sanctified in them that come nigh Him."

On July 23, we were in the company of David again as he brought Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, into his home, and restored to him the property of Saul. This is one of the many incidents in the life of David that displayed his extraordinary character, and revealed his faithfulness to the covenant he had made with Jonathan.

We were still with David on the 24th, in one of the last wars that finally brought peace to Israel through the defeat of the Syrians and Ammonites.

When we came to our readings on the 25th, a deep sense of sadness fell upon us when we saw David fail under trial. During the campaign against Rabbah of Ammon, the never-to-be-forgotten outrage of David against Bathsheba, took place. What a painful and pathetic example of the weakness of the flesh came before us as we saw this noble man desire another man's wife (when he already had several of his own) and then have the man killed so he could have the woman for his own wife.

This dishonorable act brought disaster and great sorrow into the life of David. According to the Law, he was guilty of a serious crime, and the penalty was death. However, his sin was pardoned, and in process of time Bathsheba became the mother of Solomon. Although he was freed from the death penalty, he was informed by Nathan, that God would raise up evil against him out of his own house (2 Sam. 12:10)—

"Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house."

The readings that followed, including the 16th chapter to be read today, show how quickly punishment came upon David, as disaster began to fall upon his home and family. Our readings for the next few days are a pathetic record of things that transpired in the life of David. And they are a severe lesson for each of us to remember.

These things read and inwardly digested, show the unyielding necessity of walking circumspectly in that newness of life which is vitally essential to salvation.

* * *

With one exception, we pass by at this time the readings from the prophet Jeremiah. The exception is found in ch. 9, and has a marked relationship to our subject. If we would memorize vs. 23 and 24, what a beautiful and inspirational influence they would have upon our walk in the Truth! —

"Thus saith Yahweh, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, Let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am Yahweh which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight."

"Let him glory in this." The word "glory," in this passage, means "to be proud of, to celebrate, to commend."

We are not to be proud or commend ourselves about wisdom or riches. But if we understand and know God, we have something to celebrate and glory in. For, said Jesus—

"This is life eternal, that we might know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent"—John 17:3.

Knowledge is not a gift. It must be acquired. Solomon informs us (Prov. 1:7)—

"The fear of the Lord is the principle part of knowledge."

The "fear of the Lord" means to reverence God, and when we learn to reverence God, we are on the way to knowledge and understanding of what He requires of those who seek after Him.

Our brief review of the readings for the past 10 days takes us now to the New Testament. Here we are brought into the company of Jesus, the Son of God, the manifestation of the Father, in whom centers God's purpose with the earth and its people.

We meet him in Matthew 21, and view his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and watch him as he drives the money-changers from the Temple. The following day, he was in the Temple again, and began to speak a series of parables, beginning with the Two Sons, after which he spoke the parable of the Householder who went into a far country. A general knowledge of the Truth makes this parable easy to be understood—

"There was a certain householder, who planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country"—Matt. 21:33.

The planting of the vineyard was the establishment of Israel as a nation, as the prophets testified—

"This people have I formed for Myself, that they might be unto Me for a Name, and for a praise, and for a glory"—Isa. 43:21 and Jer. 13:11.

He sent unto them His prophets, who pleaded with them, but they turned a deaf ear unto their intreaties, and mocked them, and despised His words, and misused His prophets. Finally, He sent His Son in a last effort, but they rejected and killed him. However, as the parable shows—

"The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner."

This was followed by the parable of the King who made a marriage feast for his Son. Here the theme is carried through again. The Pharisees could see that his parables were aimed at them, and they tried many times to entangle him in his talk. The case before us, in ch. 22, was invented by their question—

"Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?"

“Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's,” was an answer so conclusive, and yet so unexpected that they were silenced at once. What a simple answer—and yet what wisdom and depth of meaning!

Then the Sadducees take a turn at it and try to trap him with their question of a woman who, during her lifetime was supposed to have had 7 husbands. These, too, were silenced by a most unusual answer, and they must have realized that they had encountered an intellect far greater than their own (Mt. 22:29):

"Ye do err not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven"

This shows us that marriage is applicable to this life only, and belongs to the imperfect state. When the perfect is established, marriage will no longer be necessary—

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God has prepared for them who love Him"—1 Cor. 2:9.

On July 22, we listened to Jesus as he denounced the Scribes and Pharisees. The Scribes were a body of high state officials who, in conjunction with the Pharisees, and the high priests, constituted the Sanhedrin. The Pharisees were the most powerful party among the Jews, both in politics and religion. In politics, they were national, and opposed to the Roman rule. In religion, they adhered strictly to the letter of the Law. Paul was a member of this body, and well describes their characteristics as he stood before Agrippa.

The Pharisees also maintained that there existed an oral tradition descended from Moses, of which they pretended to be the sole possessors, and to it they ascribed an authority equal, if not greater, than the Law. They possessed an intimate knowledge of the Law, but in their eagerness to *enforce* it on *others* strictly to the letter, they omitted the weightier matters such as judgment and mercy, for, said Jesus—

"They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers"—Matt. 23:4.

These people watched Jesus closely in order to detect him, as they thought, in some breach of the Law. And they lost no opportunity to take exception to what he said, and eagerly sought how they might confound him with their artful questions.

Although they boasted in Moses, they failed to comprehend the *spirit* of the Law. Having been one of them, Paul was well qualified to give the reason—

"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but **not according to knowledge.**

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their **own** righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God"—Rom. 10:2-3.

Thus Paul describes a body of men who arrogated to themselves the power and authority formerly held by Moses as their lawgiver and judge and, therefore, as Jesus said, "*sat in Moses' seat.*" What a tragedy! Here was a people to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises—

"And they made the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition"—Matt. 15:6.

A week ago today, we sat at the feet of Jesus as he spoke the Mount Olivet prophecy. First, he mentioned the end of the Israelitish commonwealth, when Jerusalem would be destroyed, and the remnant scattered among the nations. Next came the times of the Gentiles, their closing days when

there would be distress among the nations, with perplexity. Although the tribulations that would come upon them would be severe, and the love of many would grow cold, Jesus assured them that—

"He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

It is quite possible that James was thinking of these words of Jesus when he said (5:11)—

"Behold, we count them happy which endure."

He spoke of the days of Noah, saying that conditions as they existed then, would be similar to the days of his coming. Even though the signs he gave would help, the day of his coming would be unknown. Therefore, said Jesus—

"Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching."

On Tuesday, we listened to more parables, but the most impressive things he spoke of were the results of the day when we shall all stand before him in judgment.

As the results of that experience will depend upon how we conduct ourselves during the days of our probation, it will be well for us—yea, essential for us—to examine ourselves daily under the microscope of God's Word, always keeping foremost

"God WILL be sanctified in them that come nigh Him."

In the reading for Wednesday, Jesus had reached the climax of his ministry. On that tragic night, he ate the last passover with his disciples, after which he instituted the bread and wine memorial. This was followed by his agony in the garden, the betrayal and his arrest. Then there was Peter's denial. What an awful experience for Peter! But what a magnificent life of service that followed—a life we could emulate in many ways.

That same night he was brought before the council, which was presided over by the high priest, and listened as they tried to justify their actions. The mental suffering that Jesus went through must have been acute beyond description.

On Thursday, our reading brought us again into the sufferings of Jesus. His mock trial before Pilate brought upon him the sentence of death, which was soon followed by his crucifixion. Oh, what that word conveys! The terrible suffering and agony on the cross, and then death and burial. To the disciples, it must have appeared as though their faith was in vain. All hope seemed lost—nothing but despair.

But Friday's portion was one of rejoicing. Everything had changed. The Lord Jesus had risen from the dead. Hope was restored, and joy followed their sorrow. It was for this joy that Jesus endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is now the mediator of the better covenant.

Our reading today brings before us in a most vivid manner, our relationship to the work of Jesus—

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God"—Rom. 5:1-2.

Separation from God is brought about through sin. In that condition, there is no real peace. But when we become justified by faith, as a result of our belief and obedience, we become *spiritually minded*, and that brings peace with God. There is no other way. In all Paul's letters, this subject of peace comes before us, but there is no greater example than these words from his letter to the Philippians (4:6-7)—

"In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

"And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds **through Christ Jesus.**"

It is "through Christ" that we have access by faith into this grace, or favor, wherein we stand related to that exalted fellowship with God, which brings peace. However, as God will be sanctified in them that come nigh Him, that relationship must be retained by continued faith and obedience; because faith and obedience do not cease at baptism, they only begin there. Paul is sweepingly emphatic on this point—

"Know ye not, that so many of us as are baptized into Jesus Christ are baptized into his death?"—Rom. 6:3.

This indicates that baptism is a symbolic death, for, says Paul—

"We are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in **newness of life**"—v. 4.

Following this, he refers to the death and resurrection of Christ in this manner (v. 10)—

"For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God."

Do we comprehend fully what Paul is saying, or have we become so accustomed to reading these verses that they have lost their meaning? *How* did Jesus "die unto sin?" Was it not because in the days of his ministry, his flesh was identical with ours and therefore he experienced the feeling of our infirmities and suffered being tempted? But he died unto this, and put away the body of sin, and rose to a newness of life. The old life was discontinued completely when the body of sin was destroyed, and now he possesses—

"A glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself"—Phil. 3:21.

The correspondence that Paul brings out here must be evident to all of us. When the believer goes down into the water in baptism, he dies to the old life, and rises to walk in a completely *new way of living*—a way that is pleasing to God. Paul was not just talking—he was describing his own way of living as the divine record reveals. He could truly say to the Galatians—

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"—Gal. 2:20.

These words are simple, but glowing; they are sublime and gracious, and we are thrilled as we read them because they reflect the character of one who could say with noble sincerity—

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith"—2 Tim. 4:7.

Have we the courage to face this teaching of Paul? Just think what it would do to our characters, and our way of living from day to day, if we could but keep Paul's glorious conception of "newness of life" firmly fixed in our minds and hearts. Brethren and sisters, *it must be done*, or we will never share in those things that God has promised to those who love Him and *keep His commandments*.

We come here to have our minds stirred up by way of remembrance, and set ourselves to strive to attain to the high standard set before us in the Scripture of Truth. Our minds should be a holy place lined with the Word of God, in which the sacrifice of Christ should burn as a continual offering, and from which our prayers should ascend to the Great Eternal Father. What is our position? Peter says—

"We are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a purchased people; that we should show forth the praises (virtues) of Him Who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light"—1 Pet. 2:9.

As we look at the totality of all who claim the name "Christadelphian," do we see them showing forth the praises of Him Who has called us to live in His marvellous light? Does it not almost break your heart to see many indulging in godless habits, and empty pastimes? Instead of that they should be a holy community, adorned with spiritual beauty; a community wholly dedicated to the worship and service of God.

Our keynote must be "**HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD.**" The God we serve is unchangeable. What He was in the days of Moses, He is today. The Mosaic standard was—

"I WILL BE SANCTIFIED IN
THEM THAT COME NIGH ME."

That, my beloved brethren and sisters, is the standard set before us. Let us, therefore, in all seriousness, humbleness and reverence, set ourselves to lift our minds to this Divine level, and do all in our power to be at all times a *joyful, thankful, and praise-giving* people, that we may develop among ourselves a positive fellowship and communion in the love of God, that we may prove ourselves worthy of the Name we bear. —G.A.G.

The End of the Commandment

"The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned"—1 Tim. 1: 5

The first epistle to Timothy contains much material for thought and edification. The circumstances of its writing are explained in 1:3. Paul left Timothy at Ephesus to guide the ecclesia there, and is writing to him on various matters concerning its welfare. The first injunction strikes us forcibly—

"That thou might charge some that they **teach no other doctrine.**"

Why is Paul always so zealous about the doctrine? Why are details of belief so important in his eyes? This is not just Paul's idea. He was writing by the guidance of the Spirit. *Doctrine* is important because *truth* is important. True doctrine is simply the truth regarding spiritual things—the actual facts. False doctrine is fable, darkness, confusion—contrary to fact and reality.

All our actions are based upon our conception of the facts. If our conception is wrong, our actions will be wrong. Now God has revealed certain facts and outlined for us a *certain course of action* consistent with these facts. There is no hope or safety for us in any other course. This is the one narrow course that leads to life. All the countless others lead to death. If we choose the one, we choose life. If we choose any of the others, we choose death. It is very simple. Paul is just saying,

"First and above all, see that they hold fast to that one course of belief and action that leads to life. It is plainly marked, and it is vitally important."

There are many ways, as Solomon reminds us, that appear right and just and profitable to the unguided human mind, but *God has spoken*. He has revealed the framework of truth and reality. He

has given us a divine yardstick. We do not question it, or judge it by human conceptions of wisdom. We either accept it or reject it *as a whole*, and if we accept it, we accept it without question, and measure everything by it.

But is doctrine just an arbitrary formula that we learn by rote, and repeat from memory?—"Man is mortal"—"The dead are unconscious"—"We do not go to heaven at death"—"Hell is the grave"—"Immortal soulism is a fable"?

Far from it. Knowledge is the *basis of conduct*. There lies its importance. These things are integral parts of the complete picture of truth by which our lives are guided. God has given us sufficient light to direct us. Paul makes this clear in v. 5—

"Now the **end of the commandment** is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned."

That is the "end" or *purpose of ALL* commandments, and teachings, and revelations.

Love—a pure heart—a good conscience—and an unfeigned faith. These things, to be steadfast and sure, must have a foundation of knowledge and truth. This foundation is afforded only by the Scriptures. If we wander from that narrow beam of light, we shall find in times of adversity that our love is merely self-pleasing sentiment, and our faith but the flush of self-satisfied prosperity.

In the same discussion, v. 4, Paul warns against those questions which *gratify curiosity but do not edify or upbuild*. Against these we must always beware. We do not seek knowledge for its own sake—such knowledge puffeth up. We must always remember that the *end* to which we are working is a pure heart, a good conscience, and a living, unfeigned faith; and the value of everything must be measured according as it contributes to this end.

A pure heart. What can compare with it? Guileless, open and sincere, full of light and truth. Free from remorse, regret and misgivings. Serene in the quiet confidence of godliness and purity. Innocently and happily heedless of the innuendos of the evil, the scorn of the wise, or the sarcasm of little minds.

"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27).

"Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He that has clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity."

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"

A good conscience. At first thought this seems to cover the same ground as a pure heart, but Paul does not waste words. He has another angle in mind. To attain to the perfect man we must have *both*. It is possible through ignorance to have a good conscience without a pure heart. It is possible through ignorance, but rare, to have a pure heart without a good conscience. Conscience is regulated by knowledge, purity of heart by love, and both knowledge and love are essential. Love without wisdom is maudlin and harmful—knowledge without love is cold and destructive.

Paul, with a good conscience, helped to stone Stephen—Peter, with a pure heart, would have shielded Christ from his appointed death. "Add to your virtue, knowledge," Peter himself later exhorts (2 Pet. 1:5).

And *faith unfeigned*. Why does he stress the *unfeigned* part? "Unfeigned" means real, sincere, genuine, actual. He emphasizes this because faith is something that is so easily and fatally counterfeited. It can so easily be dead when it seems alive, particularly in times of prosperity.

Faith, Hope and Love, as Paul shows, are the three fundamental virtues, and *to mean anything they must mean everything*. This is particularly true of faith. If faith is to be anything more than just pious feeling, we must launch out and throw our full weight upon it in perfect confidence, with no safety strings to some human provision lest faith lets us down.

Paul makes this clear in his letter to the Hebrews. He cites a score of memorable instances in which holy men of old, faced by a choice between faith in God and human reason, chose the former, and fearlessly pressed forward.

We are faced daily, and even hourly, with the same choice. The importance of each particular instance is irrelevant, the *principle* is the same. For faith to be unfeigned, we must give daily and practical evidence of our belief that the things that are seen by the natural sense are not the real, important things.

For faith to be unfeigned we must trust our security and wellbeing entirely to it. It is not sufficient just to abstain from wrong. That is just prudence and commonsense. The rich young ruler had all that, but still he lacked the courage to give his faith life. It's easy to be faithful with security behind us, but when Jesus said, "Go and sell all that thou hast and give to the poor," his faith was exposed for what it was. All his life he had been deceiving himself, *making a hobby of goodness but lacking the power thereof*. It is written,

"The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17).

"Examine yourselves, **whether ye be in the faith**; prove your own selves . . . For we are glad when ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection" (2 Cor. 13:5,9).

In the last seven verses of chapter 2, Paul touches upon the special position of women according to the divine purpose. He speaks of apparel and ornaments, of modesty and sobriety. (What would Paul think of painted faces and enamelled nails?)

Then he speaks of deeper things—of woman in relation to the man. Woman's position in this respect is a difficult one, especially in times and conditions such as these, but if with the help of God, she fills it with graciousness and perception, it will earn her an unfading crown of glory.

Pride is the greatest handicap; and pride (which is only a vain form of ignorance) is equally rampant and offensive to God in man as in woman. Man's subjection and humility is required no less than woman's, but God has decreed that in order for harmony to prevail, a proper and scriptural relation between the two must be maintained, as Paul outlines.

* * *

In chapter 3, Paul speaks of the qualifications necessary in those put into positions of responsibility. These things are written for our admonition, and vitally affect the welfare of the body. These are rules—*commands*—not just suggestions, and we do well to ponder them carefully when called upon to select the servants of the ecclesia.

Vigilance for the faith, ever watchful. That comes first, just as Paul opens the epistle with the earnest exhortation to pure doctrine. Then sobriety, hospitality, patience, gentleness, gravity, freedom from the lure of temporal wealth, and the ability to govern their household firmly and well. Paul says "*must*." If we ignore these restrictions and commands, we cannot hope for good results, and we are responsible for what ensues.

In chapter 4, Paul returns to the theme of doctrine. This is the foundation of all, the bond that holds all together, that which gives everything a meaning. Neglect the doctrine, and all will crumble. God has declared it; history proves it; our own experience confirms it.

Furthermore, there is only one bulwark against all the speculations and superstitions of the human mind, and that is the *one revealed Truth*. As Paul points out, as soon as men wander from that which is revealed, there is no limit to the absurdities they will invent and impose on others. We see the principal example of this in modern Babylon, to some of whose practices Paul prophetically refers. Therefore, he says,

"Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine . . . Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

Then he says (v. 7), "*Exercise thyself unto godliness.*" And he compares this with bodily exercise, showing its superiority. We are all aware of the benefits of consistent bodily exercise—how the powers and possibilities of the body can be developed to almost unbelievable degrees of ability and perfection—we think of the fingers of the pianist, the feet of the dancer, and the muscles of the athlete—marvellous examples of the value of practice and application, but all to a perishing end.

Rather *practice godliness*, Paul says. This will last when all other talents and abilities are consumed by the resistless march of time. This alone has profit both in this life and in that which is to come. Develop your talents with an eye to eternity. Lay up your treasure in heaven.

Practice makes perfect, we are told. This is natural law which holds good in spiritual things. *Practice godliness*, Paul urges. Make it your consuming ambition. Give thyself wholly to it. There is no higher aim possible than to *be like God*. That is ambition enough for one life time. We cannot afford to be bothered with passing things. Give thyself *wholly* to it. We remember the first and greatest commandment—

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with **all** thy heart and with **all** thy soul and with **all** thy mind."

A part-time service is a mockery—worse than none at all. "I would," Jesus says, "that ye were either cold or hot" (Rev. 3:15).

Chapter 5 deals more directly with the *practical application* of these principles. Some verses are very striking and timeless in their timeliness.

"If any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home" (v. 4).

We are reminded of James' words—

"Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows."

And also in verse 8 in this same chapter—

"If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

True religion is essentially *practical*. It is a way of life, not merely a form of belief. It consists of doing, to the best of our ability, and in harmony with divine revelation, those simple daily things that come to our hand, not for reward or profit but *AS UNTO GOD*, knowing that nothing so done will be forgotten by Him.

"*If any provide not for his own, he hath denied the faith.*" Does Paul contradict the words of Jesus when he said—

"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on, for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

We know that there can be no contradiction, and there is none. The words of Jesus do not condone slothfulness, neither do the words of Paul condone hoarding. Both are harmonized by Jesus' summary, giving scope for both industry and faith.

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

"*Give us this day our daily bread.*" Here is the field for faith and dependence upon God. To use what comes to our hands today as God would have it used, and trust Him for tomorrow. "*He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.*" Will the Lord withhold when the need comes? Should we hold some back in case the Lord forgets? How the paltry benefits of earthly investments pale before the great insurance company of ever-watchful divine Providence.

V. 19: "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses."

The R.V. says, "*At the mouth of two or three witnesses*" and all versions and lexicons support this meaning. A single accusation is not to be received against one whom the ecclesia has placed in a position of responsibility. The wisdom of the injunction is apparent.

"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

Is Paul overlooking the course of reconciliation as outlined by Jesus? Of course not, and neither should we. It is obvious that this command applies when all private efforts have failed.

Then verses 24 and 25: "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid."

There is a wealth of meaning, comfort, and warning in these two verses. Some men's sins are apparent to all. Some only God can see. Some suffer deep humiliation and hardship for their indiscretions, some sin far more, but outwardly appear fair to men—*all* have sinned—only mercy can save us.

So with good works. Only God can judge the hearts. The humble and obscure daily service of the poor is much more in God's sight than the flashy, intermittent generosity of the rich.

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5).

The faithful will be content to wait that day in patience.

In 6:5 Paul speaks of some who "suppose that gain is godliness"—that prosperity is a sign of blessing. Let us guard ourselves against this common error. The men of whom the world was not worthy, as Paul says, were those who "*wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented.*" To them doubtless, as to Job, it would be said in derision—"Gain proves godliness; affliction shows some hidden sin."

Gain, if it is a sign of anything, is a sign of greater responsibility, greater requirement, greater temptation, greater anxiety, the need for greater care and faithfulness.

"If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"

We are but stewards—all things are God's.

"But godliness with contentment is great gain . . . Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content" (1 Tm. 6:6).

"Having food and raiment, let us be therewith CONTENT." Do we obey this command? *"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?"*

Having, by the mercy of God, the bare necessities for material existence, let us turn our attention to higher things.

"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts" (v. 9).

What does he mean by *"rich"*? How much is it necessary to have? It is not a matter of amount, but of principle. *"Having food and raiment, therewith be content"* is the principle. The man of God does not need any limit set. He is *eager* to be about his Father's business. But we must not say that he begrudges the time necessary to earn his living. That, too, can be a pleasurable service to God if approached in the proper spirit. The motive, the desire of the heart, is the determining factor.

It is the love of wealth, the desire for gain—always something a little better, a little flashier, a later model, a newer fashion—that is the root of all evil, as Paul says in v. 10—pride and greed and the lust of the eye, no matter how disguised.

"But thou, O man of God, flee these things"—realize their foolish emptiness—*"and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."*

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life . . . "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust" . . . "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine . . . Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them" . . . "Grace be with thee. Amen" —G.V.G.

Signs of The Times

"The King of the South shall push at him."

The world situation today reminds one of a widely-extended forest fire, in which two major fires (the Middle-East and Eastern Europe) command most of the attention, yet other small fires smolder in other areas. While the minor fires may, or may not have any direct connection with the larger conflagrations, still there is a connection, a certain pattern which stems from the same source.

War against the French in Algeria and eruptions against British rule in Cyprus continue. And lately there have been revolutionary movements in a number of countries, in fact so many that their significance cannot be overlooked. In Cuba, Haiti, Ireland and Indonesia uprisings have occurred within a month, and all taken together are symptomatic of that unrest and dissatisfaction which exists among the various peoples of the earth in fulfilment of the Savior's prophecy that the time just preceding his coming would be marked by the shaking of the political heavens, "the sea and the waves roaring" (Luke 21:25-26). And although the UN was organized for the specific purpose of adjusting and settling the differences among the peoples of the earth and bringing about equality, justice and freedom to all, yet they seem powerless to settle anything, as they seek to accomplish everything by appeasing those who are chiefly responsible for stirring up the trouble.

The fatal weakness of the UN lies in the fact that, while some of the **minor** problems can be dissolved through negotiations with the parties in disagreement, they actually have no power to enforce anything on any nation such as Russia, neither on any weak nation, such as Egypt, when supported by Russia.

Though the United States and other members of the UN would like the world to think that fear of Russia had nothing to do with their actions in the Middle-East, and their lack of action in Hungary, yet no one with an unbiased mind could have followed even the carefully-worded newscasts without coming to the conclusion that fear of what Russia might do tempered, if it was not the sole cause of, every action taken to settle the Middle-East trouble; and by the same token nothing stronger than protests was directed against the Russian slaughter and deportation of the Hungarians. And whatever others might think, Egypt and the Arab nations know that all they need to bring the Western powers to terms, is to get Russian support. It worked with Egypt, and no doubt has had much to do with Syria and Jordan courting Russian friendship.

All this should be shocking to a world of wishful thinkers who have been "willingly ignorant" of one of the most obvious facts concerning modern Russia. It has been carefully concealed from the masses of the people by subtle propaganda, the object of which was to picture Russia and Communist China as always on the verge of revolution, and suffering from internal weakness which threatened at any moment to bring down their whole economic and political structure in ruins. The Russian and Chinese people were pictured as mere slaves of a communist clique which held them in servitude solely by force of arms, a people who might at any time turn against their oppressors. Hitler found out to his sorrow that, instead of a people who would welcome the Germans as liberators, he found a people fanatically loyal to their country and ready to sacrifice their goods and even their lives in its defence.

In attempting to appraise the condition of these people, it is common to compare their situation with the most favored peoples on earth. Rather it should be compared with the oppression, tyranny and deprivation which they suffered under previous forms of government. In this way one can understand why these people can be satisfied and even loyal to what appears to more favored people as tyranny and a low standard of living. A people who never had enough to eat in all their lives are satisfied with just enough of the humblest fare, even though they must obtain it under harsh conditions.

And so the unwelcome truth is coming out. Russia's enemies can no longer rest in the illusion of pending economic and political collapse. It can no longer be concealed that both Russia and Red China have made such phenomenal strides in both military and economic advancement that the Western world can no longer brush off the threats which they now know can be backed by unexcelled military might and industrial production.

Already it is being admitted by the less optimistic that Russia has equalled, if not surpassed, other nations in the development of atomic power; also the fact that Russia has as many, if not more, submarines than all the Western powers combined. Her industrial production, though still in its infancy, has now nearly equalled that of the Western powers, and is rapidly expanding. A news item reveals: "With world technological supremacy the goal, Russia last week made public a plan to turn out 4 million scientists, engineers and technicians by 1961."

But it is not Russian industrial expansion alone that is causing anxiety among the Western nations. Communist China is in like manner making such great strides in industry and agriculture that it is now agriculturally self-sufficient and is now seriously threatening to take over the markets of Southeast Asia in certain lines of goods.

In Russia and China alone (not counting satellites) there are 600 million people who have been reborn, and are not only rapidly becoming self-sufficient, but may soon challenge the rest of the world in production. It matters not so much **how** it has been done; the awful fact is that **it is being**

done. Russia and the "many countries with her" are rapidly arriving at that "plenitude of power" which will enable Russia to assume the role of Gog, King of the North (Eze. 38:10; Dan. 11:40-45) who is to seek world empire and will only be prevented from doing so by the coming of the King of Kings.

There are many indications that the Middle-East situation is growing more complicated and more threatening, and that the events connected with the Suez canal affair have worsened, rather than helped the situation. The United States' foreign policy seems due for a complete revision, the State Department having at last awakened to the fact that there is serious trouble in that area and, unless something is done about it, and done quickly, the Russian Bear will have his feet so firmly planted in Mid-Eastern ground that no nation or combination of nations can dislodge him.

President Eisenhower has asked for the consent of Congress for authority to use the armed forces of the U. S. to oppose aggression against any Middle-East nation and to defend their territory and their political integrity. Of great significance is the fact that the President in his address before the Congress made it clear and unmistakable that **his references to aggressors was pointed directly at Russia**, which means that the U. S. has assumed the task of keeping Russia out of the Middle-East. It amounts to the same thing as a declaration of war against the Soviets if and when they make any aggressive move against any Middle-East nation. And in this connection the President called attention to the fact that the Russian policy has been, first to penetrate a country through diplomatic and economic means under the guise of aid and protection, and then absorb them into the Soviet Union by forceful measures. It can no longer be denied that 3 nations in the Middle-East have already become puppets of Russia—Egypt, Syria and Jordan.

The Christadelphians have all along interpreted Eze. 38:15 as indicating that the Anglo-American forces would be present in Palestine when Gog descends upon the land. So it was somewhat puzzling when Britain pulled out of Palestine and the U. S. showed no interest at all in assuming responsibility in the Middle-East area. But God works in mysterious and unexpected ways to bring about His purposes. He has said to Gog:

"I will bring thee against My land that the nations may know Me, when I am sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes"—Eze. 38:16.

As God was sanctified in the eyes of the nations in the destruction of Pharaoh, Israel's ancient oppressor, so in the destruction of the Gogian host, when they come against the land of Israel, God will make all nations know that "the time to favor Zion has come."

We are now witnessing marvellous events. Strange reversals of international policies and actions, all tending toward a single purpose—the **gathering of all nations to the great arena of God's final judgments upon the nations**. We see Britain once more compelled to take the side of Israel, the United States adopting a policy of direct, even **armed** intervention, if necessary, in the Middle-East; and **Russia just as determined to dominate this area** and oppose every move of the Western powers to enhance their influence in this coveted, strategic and wealth-producing land, even "God's land," which is soon to be the center of a divine dominion which alone can bring to an end the age-old controversies and conflicts of this unhappy country.

* * *

"As it was in the days of Noah."

"The earth was filled with violence." Not only is crime and violence rampant in the "dark places of the earth," but right here in America, where freedom of religion, thought and action has had the greatest opportunity to develop, the nation is, or should be appalled at the latest report of the Federal Bureau of Investigation on the alarming increase of crime during the past year. In some areas the increase has been up to 30 per cent. The report states that 2,534,000 major crimes were committed in the U. S. during 1956, an overall increase of 12 per cent. This, it should be noted, includes only **major** crimes, not mentioning the innumerable petty crimes.

Having a direct connection with this increase in crime, a Harvard professor, who is credited with being "an expert on human behavior," says:

"Americans are victims of a sex mania as malignant as cancer and as socially menacing as communism . . . Our morals have changed so notably that continency, chastity and faithfulness are increasingly viewed as oddities, as the ossified survival of a prehistorical age."

This in America, supposedly the Utopia of the world, where "the American way of life" is held up as an example for all the world to follow! Surely the "time to reap" is at hand. —O.B.

Ecclesial News

NEW TREDEGAR, Mon., England

Our number has so far depleted that we are no longer holding our meetings at the Workmen's Hall as we did for many years. There are just three of us, with an occasional fourth, who remember our absent Lord in the way appointed, at the home of the writer on the first day of each week.

We are greatly helped in our determination to keep firm in the faith by the knowledge of those of like precious faith in other parts of the world who are doing likewise in keeping the commandments of Christ while we wait and pray for his coming.

We are grateful to the members of the Newport ecclesia for their visits, and their company at the table of the Lord, and for their exhortations. On Nov. 4, bre. Williams and Hodge, and sisters Williams and Rees visited us, and bro. Williams gave the word of exhortation. On Dec. 2, bre Williams and Hodge, and sis. Williams Sr., visited us with the same joyful purpose, and this time brought a tape recorder which enabled us to hear a message from bro. Gibson of Toronto, Canada.

In these days of darkness and degeneration in the things of the Truth, it is delightful to find a machine which can be used for so good a purpose. We are deeply grateful to our American brethren who have made these recordings available to us, and to bro. Williams for bringing the recorder to help and sustain us. May our heavenly Father grant His blessing upon all such efforts, and watch over us that we may hold fast the faith unto the end. —bro. Ivor Morgan.

Minding the Things of the Flesh

Once upon a time we were all in the condition described by the phrase "after the flesh." We knew life and action in the light only of the thoughts and affections belonging to the unenlightened natural man. In those, the days of our flesh, the leading desire of the mind was **to have pleasure**.

Some of us sought it one way, some in another; but all of us were alike in being governed by this craving for enjoyment, which is the universal characteristic of those who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, whether they be intellectual or sensual, refined or brutal, educated or ignorant, rich or poor, old or young.

Being after the flesh, we "minded the things of the flesh." We had a controlling interest in and regard for the things that tend to the gratification of "the desires of the flesh." These are legion, and in high esteem everywhere. They begin with the common wants of life, which, while legitimate enough in the subordinate place in which Christ placed them, are evil pursued as an end. We were deeply interested in **making a living**.

Next, it was a supreme object to have a **fine house**, and to make opulent **provision for our families**. From that we went on to desire **respectability**, and the **good opinion of the world**. After

that we were interested in pleasure in all its endless ramifications, from hunting with aristocrats down to song singing in the pot-house.

Intermediately and more respectably, we were taken up perhaps with some **hobby of science or art**. But whatever form our taste or affection might take, it was comprisable in Paul's saying that we "minded the things of the flesh." We were deeply interested in them; we spent much money on them, those of us who had it to spend. Our lives were moved and formed by them. —**Bro. Roberts.**

PRINTED IN U. S. A.
